



## Teacher Support Staff Superintendent Advisory

4:00-5:00 p.m.

Tuesday, Feb. 18, 2014

Administration Building – 215 S. 6<sup>th</sup> Street West

Superintendent's Office

Members: Adriel Shearer, Alex Apostle, Anthony Zook, Avis Chenoweth, Bradford Herron, Carol MacIntyre, Cathleen Armstrong, Connie Pederson, Dave Burtch, Diane Anderson, Elizabeth McGrath, Hatton Littman, Janice Nugent, Karen Allen, Mary McAllister, Melanie Charlson, Melissa Lynn, Sarah Lee, Tricia Owens

Present: Alex Apostle, Cathleen Armstrong, Crista Anderson, Camille Barraclough, Jane McAllister, Janice Nugent, Diane Anderson, Elizabeth McGrath, Connie Pederson, Heather Davis Schmidt, Trevor Laboski, Hatton Littman, Sarah Lee, Tricia Owens, Karen Allen, Kathleen Nerison

Absent: Adriel Shearer, Avis Chenoweth, Brad Herron, Dave Burtch, Melissa Lynn, Anthony Zook, Carol MacIntyre, Melanie Charlson

## NOTES

**Welcome** – At 4:00 p.m. Superintendent Alex Apostle opened the meeting; he stated that five people sent regrets that they were unable to attend. The meeting occurred in the superintendent's office; it was moved from Room 14.

**ESL program lack of funding and minimal services** – Karen Allen (Mary McAllister)  
Karen was not here yet; we will wait for Karen to discuss this item. See discussion below.

**FERPA Compliance: Provide staff with definitive information** – Mark Thane (Diane Anderson)  
Mark is in negotiations; we will wait for Karen to discuss this. See discussion below.

**Develop tracking system for issues discussed in TSSS** - All (Diane Anderson)  
Diane would like to see some method of following up on things we bring forward; we don't always hear outcomes of things we task people with, and she would like to hear if things are dealt with at the building level or district level. She suggested that it may save time if someone asks why about

something, because we will have a historical record for what we have done. A lot of our people don't go to the district webpage and read the minutes. We have to give people some access point that is 3 clicks and an answer. Alex: you would hope people would take time to read the minutes, but if there is another way, we would do it too. Diane: they are looking for a specific topic, not wanting to go through the whole minutes. When people have a limited amount of time, they are only looking for key words or something searchable for text. There is more reading to the minutes, and there is not the tracking of how things have progressed. Tricia Owens suggested a spreadsheet like we use for the school improvement team—showing the issue, when it was brought forward, and the results; it would keep us on track too if something continues to say it is in progress. Alex agreed that would be very good. Camille suggested that it be set up to view but not to edit like a Google doc. Tricia: we could see our points and follow them through. Diane added that we could brag about what we have finished. Alex asked Diane to work with Hatton on that. Elizabeth McGrath arrived.

### **How academies, IB Programme, and programs are chosen for schools and funding questions –**

**Heather Davis Schmidt (Sarah Lee)** Sarah Lee: Multiple people came to her with gossip of how schools were chosen for things, and also with questions about the funding: whether all schools are receiving funding, why some schools get sent to training and others do not. Alex said he has been saying to schools for at least 3 years that he encourages them to think out of the box. He tells them they are doing a good job and asks if there is something you would like to focus on as a school at this point. He has left it open. Some schools have been involved in things that fit into the P20 grant; we have sent those schools to training. In terms of the programs: Heather explained that the only one on this list that was not born of the same philosophy as the rest is dual language: Paxson had the enrollment coming in to add a classroom per grade level, so it would not disrupt the staff to add the program. With that said, it is not necessarily the way we'll go forward. The Lewis and Clark staff came to Dr. Apostle and said they were interested in pursuing IB Primary Years Program (PYP). Hellgate HS even before that came to Dr. Apostle and expressed interest in IB. We were able to secure Shape P20, and part of that was about creating a K-12 IB continuum. We asked how do we do that; the decision was to reach out to Washington Middle School and ask if they are interested; they are doing a feasibility study. Seeley Swan is moving forward with the IB Middle Years Program (MYP); they are using Title I funds. For any school-wide program, our Title I schools can use that funding to move toward the IB program. All the principals are going to visit the dual language program to learn more about it. Rattlesnake is looking into learning more about it. It is very much a grass roots process. Alex: there is no way that we can go into a school and say to a school "you will develop a program" specifically. It really has to come from a majority of the staff like for the L&C IB PYP and the Big Sky HS academy. It has to come from the staff. In 2010 we had nearly 200 people who worked on the Schools for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Model of Education, which we are calling Achievement for All. From that work, based on that effort and direction, that is how these programs came about. Alex said as we moved forward, he knocked on a lot of doors to gather the funding to support the model of 21<sup>st</sup> century education and the current programs. If we continue to do the things we are doing, we are making the Washington Foundation happy; they are interested and excited about what we are doing. If we continue to do well in terms of increasing the graduation rate, reducing the dropout rate, and making that a K-12 issue, we will get money from the Washington Foundation and other foundations to support us. If a school was interested in any of the programs included in the P20 grant, they qualified for funding. Sarah: at Rattlesnake we are working on robotics and ecology, but there does not seem to be funding for either. Alex: if a school is talking about becoming a magnet school, we would have to take a look at it. But if the school wants to have a theme, we will do everything we can to support you. He has mentioned to all elementaries that if you want to pursue them, we will support you. We need to transition our budget to support a 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environment. If a school is interested, it may not fall within the current P20 grant. Karen: there is

robotics for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade at Lowell and Chief Charlo. That went out to all schools, and Rattlesnake did not express interest. Sarah: last year kits were purchased for Rattlesnake and left at that. Heather: kits were purchased for Rattlesnake at their request, and the 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers were provided training, Heather worked with Jerry and could not get the interest from the Rattlesnake teachers. It is open to 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade this fall. In the future it could be open to more grades. Alex: not all schools move at the same pace; we have to take into consideration those differences and still support every school. If one takes longer to make a decision, we need to be there to support their innovation and creativity. Heather: Rattlesnake has a good start in interest in ecology and STEM, but there is not the structural component, evidence-based, to place around it, that would help us to get funding. Karen suggested Project Lead the Way (PLTW) modules in ecology. We just learned that PLTW training will be available to teachers not only at schools doing PLTW. She suggested that those interested find out what PLTW has to offer through the Hawthorne teachers. Heather: Hawthorne is a pilot school for PLTW this year. Alex: we always talk about creating options for our students. We also want to create them for our staff. It is very positive that our schools are doing different things. Common Core will establish a standard, but it does not dictate the specifics of what we need to do to get there. We have options to increase creativity and capture the interest of our students. There are districts in the country where every high school, every elementary, and every middle school is different. That's the way it should be. The standards should be high, but how we get there is up to our professional staff. Heather: a lot of teachers have brought proposals to her, and she brings them to Dr. Apostle and cabinet, and we work together to create the structure and funding to support that. Alex: they have sacrificed in terms of what they have been doing in the past and moved to support the new direction. Eventually that is the way it probably will have to be. That's how it happens in the private sector; we will have to follow. Karen: it is important for people to know because there is discussion periodically about forcing. But at Big Sky HS 90 percent of the staff voted to go IB. Trevor: we had a gap, a real need for college prep courses. We spent a year investigating IB, and the staff got to choose IB vs. AP. We have the beauty of the 21<sup>st</sup> century document: if he were teaching, he would pull it out and generate ideas, and bring them to the principal. We are blessed to have that. Funding does have to happen. That is a plan we created as a district: it is very powerful. Alex said he has not forced anyone to do anything. We are as democratic a school district as you will find. We are allowing staff in more cases than not to select principals; we have this group; we have the cabinet. You want people to feel good about what they are doing. If a school decides they want to go in a direction, we let them. IB was a vote at Lewis and Clark; over 90 percent of the staff voted for it. Heather: the ideas did not start with us; they started with the staff. Washington is a little different; there was pressure from parents on both sides. Alex told Washington it was up to them; if they didn't want to do it, another school might. Diane: people have seen this fleshed out. We didn't know a lot about IB and career academies going in. We are hesitant to try new things; it's great that people wanted to try them. There is also a place for healthy tension and questions that help us determine our highest priorities. When we developed the document for change, we talked about how we will try some things and not always do them well. Some people will jump in, while others will want to see that it works first. Look at students and parents who are willing to give feedback. People are there in the evening, Fridays and Saturdays. Trevor hears all the time the question of how can you find something in one school and not others, yet he also hears that we are forcing things on the teachers. You can't have it both ways. Some people are in different places and we have to be okay with that. We are 6 months to 2 years into some of the initiatives. Some might not continue. Alex: if something doesn't work, we go to Plan B. Not everything we tried in the past worked. If we have an issue with a program, we go back to the drawing board, analyze what works and what does not. He does not push people to do things they don't want to do. He does encourage them to think outside the box and try new things. Almost every teacher who has gone out to professional development has come back excited, saying if they can do it, let's do it here.

### **Printers – Hatton Littman (Adriel Shearer)**

Hatton noted that Adriel is not here; she suggested that she could speak in a global sense and then when he is here we could cover it. Hatton: the question is about having network printers vs. printers in every office or classroom. When it was addressed at tech committee, the overwhelming response was that we should allow printers in every office or classroom. However, the challenge is if a staff member's printer goes down and we can allow them access to a network printer until we can address theirs, it causes an issue. She said she will not make promises about what we can do. But coming into the district and looking at the amount of money we spend on printer cartridges and printers, is not in the best interests of the district. We will be addressing the question at tech committee as to whether it serves our best interests as a district. Karen asked about the amount of spending on printer cartridges. It has shifted from central to building budgets. She could probably find the numbers on what we spend in terms of repair and pc network tech time on repair. It is an issue that requires more investigation. She understands why, when it was discussed several years ago, we wanted people to have access to printers in convenient locations. Hatton said that is her global response; she will follow up with Adriel about the staff member in his building and the specific concern.

Tricia asked about how to get on the tech committee. She noted that there is a teacher who has an InterWrite board in the corner and can't use it. Karen suggested that there should be a place for frequently asked questions: e.g. what do I do if my white board needs moved, etc. Hatton: that existed in tech documents from the old website; it has not been migrated: 1-shifts in where support would be provided; 2-until the recent tech levy passed, we did not have funds to respond. Trevor suggested they could ask the principal too. This teacher explained that a different teacher has been in that room every year; the current teacher is Mary Dooley. Hatton said we can identify where it will be that it will serve the greatest good. It was one of the first ones to go in, not user friendly. Crista Anderson: those placed in the first year were placed at the location of the teachers' choice; many issues occurred. Hatton: the 2015 bond will help address this. Alex: it won't solve everything; but it must pass for a number of reasons; including this situation. It is frustrating for our staff to deal with these things.

### **Help desk tickets: Weekly reporting to Dept. Chairs – Hatton Littman (Diane Anderson)**

Hatton: this was brought up in September/October and we have not addressed it. She has discussed it with the team, and we would need to redirect who has the ultimate say on reprioritizing tickets. Essentially the current protocol is that we send help desk tickets to principals, who can reprioritize. If we add department chairs to that, which we can, we would have the potential of contradictory information in terms of prioritizing. She is somewhat concerned about making that shift because some buildings are following different protocols with regard to Q and opening windows. Her concern is that it would require the department chairs and principal to collaborate well in changing the priority status. Diane: is it possible to do it as read only for department chairs, so they have some idea of the potential time frame/time limit? She has that ability with the Montana Shared Catalog, where she can track what the libraries are doing. Hatton thinks that is do-able. She needs to check our help desk software limits; she assumes we are talking primarily about high schools when we talk about department chairs. She will confirm the numbers that we can expand to for read only. Is there a concern for middle and elementary that more people besides the principal need to see it? Heather suggests that we consider moving our librarians to media tech support in addition to their role as research instruction. We could maybe also send it to librarians. Karen: schools have shared drives; if people have a question they can look there. Hatton: the building tech committee person should receive it as read only. She added that each school has a different perspective or desire with regard to how their tech committee will function. Some schools have a district tech committee representative who is proactive, some do not. Alex: are we getting the service that is required out there in terms of these requests? Alex summarized that we are in a period of transition; Hatton is aware of these issues and sorting them out and reorganizing. He knows it is high on

her agenda. He asks that we give her an opportunity to observe how we have done it in the past and to reorganize.

**ESL program lack of funding and minimal services – Karen Allen (Mary [Jane] McAllister)**

Karen asked Jane to explain. Jane said she has a boy from Israel in 4<sup>th</sup> grade, who spoke no English at the beginning. He is a very active young man. It is a challenging class this year, and it has been a tough year to find things appropriate for him. She shadowed with Karen, who did follow-up with Betsy Williams, ESL coordinator. Jane's main concern was that in December to the end of January, we had no tutoring services because they were doing testing required by Title I to make sure English language students were making progress. She had asked for the background on funding. She said we have Title III funding helping to pay for part of the tutors and some funding to help hire UM students and work study students. But they have not been able to find someone who speaks Hebrew. We have 96 identified English language learners in the district, and 3 people to test them Dec. 4-Jan. 30. Because we are the lead district, they are in charge of more students at Hellgate Elementary and Lolo. During the testing time they were unable to tutor students. When they returned to tutoring, the students had had no one working with them for a month and a half. The district has 24 immigrant students; 12 are in the first year at U.S. schools; 4 are at Lewis and Clark. Jane is frustrated with the lack of tutoring; Karen McCloney who works with the students gives them 45 minutes of instruction; they have one for Hebrew, one for Nepalese. She said if Jane could get them anything, they would appreciate the funding to have others do the testing so tutoring could continue during that time. Karen McCloney is trying to write grants. Heather has learned through exploration of dual language immersion, that dual language as a program and as an intervention for English as a 2<sup>nd</sup> language has been found to be very effective. We could have students who spoke another language participate in dual language immersion. Research has found that it levels the playing field. Though they are learning 2 new languages, it becomes more manageable to those students. Heather thinks a challenge is the point at which they come in; 4<sup>th</sup> grade is different than kindergarten. Karen: we have done ESL the same way for a long time. The next step has to be: how does it work? What other ways might we be able to do it differently, using some more modern strategies? Karen said we did hire a person in the high school to test the kids other than at Hellgate HS. But this is an opportunity to look at how we do it. A student's mom said they had visited a school in Iowa City where they have a language immersion class, in which all kids in the district go for 4 hours and do English immersion, then go back to their respective schools in the afternoon. Jane plans for the diverse classroom as well as trying to find activities for this student. She used peer mentoring, etc., when there was no tutoring; it was very difficult. There were absolutely no services at all. It is ironic that they are trying to monitor them but not serving them for 6 weeks. Alex appreciates what she is saying. He spoke about the other side: the impact on the student is that they feel totally lost. He recounted his experience as a student with show and tell, when you were supposed to tell what you did during the weekend. He could not speak English; he was the firstborn and his parents spoke Greek. We need to look at providing support to the teacher as well as the kids. It is a hardship for the teacher and very detrimental in terms of student growth. Jane thinks peer mentoring, hearing the language, and working with peers, works for some but not all students. She wants the year in the U.S. to be a positive experience for the student. Jane has never had a student with absolutely no English. Hatton asked if they are connected with Har Shalom. Yes. Shirley is paying a tutor out of her pocket to come; she is trying to find someone from the university who might need some hours. The tutor speaks a little Hebrew and has some background. There are cultural issues also. Heather thinks that at Lewis and Clark, Paxson, Washington, and Hellgate HS, students may be here short term while parents are at the university. Alex wants to know where we are going, our next steps on the ESL issue. Karen said she does not know; she will get together with Jane. Betsy is retiring; it is a chance to change how we do things. Alex: programmatically in terms of the long run we need to put a plan together. We need to deal with this

situation as best we can. He does not want this to drop away. It is important for students and staff, and for kids who can't speak English or comprehend what is going on in classes. He asked Karen to get back to us on this.

Karen noted that Kathleen Nerison is here; Karen had asked her to come and talk about the question about technology, from the tech committee. Kathleen said she has read the minutes; it was a pretty thorough discussion. Before the tech piece, we will talk about FERPA.

**FERPA Compliance: Provide staff with definitive information** – Mark Thane (Diane Anderson)  
Diane suggested we table this discussion for next time; enough of our folks are fuzzy as to information. Alex said it will be first on the agenda next time. Karen asked Diane to gather situations to help us understand when people need the information or don't need it. Heather asked if this is about health records. Diane was not sure. Alex suggested we bring Bea so she can spell out legally where we are at. Karen asked if we could start with Mark. Question from Camille, from Meadow Hill: she wonders if they could email Mark questions and scenarios. Hatton suggested Google docs sharing information. Yes, it would give a larger picture of questions. Alex: it would give Mark an idea of what we need; if there are questions, we will bring in Bea.

Karen: an adaptive tech committee, where someone might think we need adaptive technology and a team to evaluate? Janice would have to look back and see. People were concerned about the district overall tech committee being available to people, if skilled district tech people could help make that work. Hatton: if students come with particular assistive technology, we can make sure that there is a way to troubleshoot with staff and family. Kathleen: we have folks trained in depth in terms of assessing assistive technology needs. There is a need for us to have speech and language therapists involved. We do have people we have sent to trainings to further understanding of that. We need to move forward as a department in terms of making the process clear and training people how to access that. She would be happy to come back, talk more about that, and give specifics. Janice: people on the tech committee brought up the idea they would like to have more resources. Alex: we will put you on the agenda.

Alex noted that it is 5:00. That concludes our meeting; we will meet again next month. Thank you for being here. If you have special concerns, let Carol White know. Diane reminded everyone of the online request on the website.

As recording secretary for this meeting, I certify these minutes to be a true and correct copy of what was taken at the meeting.

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Elizabeth Serviss, Minutes Recorder

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Alex P. Apostle, Superintendent

Wiki link for Teacher, Support Staff, Superintendent, Advisory Committee Information

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